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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2754

March 1, 1996

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE COVERAGE EXPANDED** -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (February 27) regulations implementing and expanding provisions of USDA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Payments are made to eligible producers when the expected "area" yield is less than 65 percent of normal and individual crop losses are in excess of 50 percent of the approved yield. Defining an "area" is a critical step in determining whether assistance will be provided. The new regulations will allow an entire county to be considered an 'area'. The acres and values criteria are the same as those used last year. However, allowing counties to qualify as an 'area' will allow assistance to growers who suffered major crop losses but were formerly disqualified based on the value and acreage loss criteria. Different types or varieties of a crop or commodity will now be treated as separate crops if their prices differ substantially from other types or varieties. **Contact: Jerry Alanko (202) 720-5622.**

**CROP INSURANCE REMINDER** -- Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman reminded growers (February 27) that they need to obtain crop insurance offered under the Federal Crop Insurance Act by the local sales closing date to stay eligible for many USDA farm programs and loans. Sales closing dates are significant because signing up for insurance, changing the crops insured or changing coverage levels must be done prior to the announced date. The first Spring sales closing date was February 28, and the next closing date will be March 15. Sales closing dates vary by crop and location. USDA has increased price elections on major crops and introduced two new pilot programs to test the concept of revenue insurance. The two pilot programs are called Crop Revenue Coverage and Income Protection. **Contact: Ken Ackerman (202) 690-2803.**

**COTTON DEFICIENCY PAYMENT RATE** -- Grant Buntrock, Executive Vice President of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced (February 23) that the deficiency payment rate for the 1995 crop of upland cotton will be zero. Deficiency payments are required when the national average price received by producers during the calendar year is below the established target price of 72.9 cents per pound. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the target price and the higher of the calendar year national average market price or the price support loan rate. The 1995 calendar year average price was 76.8 cents per pound. Since the year average price was above the target price, the deficiency payment rate is zero. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

**DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR RICE ANNOUNCED** -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced (February 23) that eligible rice producers will receive about \$171 million in final deficiency payments for the 1995 crop of rice. The 1996-crop total payment rate is based on the difference between the established target price (\$10.71 per hundredweight) and the higher of the national average price support loan rate (\$6.50 per hundredweight) for the crop, or a selected market price. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

**ANIMAL WELFARE GETS ADDED ATTENTION --** Pet theft, inhumane treatment and the improper care and breeding of animals are receiving added attention from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said, "Pet theft and animal abuse will not be tolerated. Animal welfare is not a second-class issue at the USDA. We intend to improve standards and toughen enforcement." Under Glickman's direction, Mike Dunn, head of USDA's marketing and regulatory programs, is spearheading efforts to improve USDA's oversight of the care and handling of companion animals. Currently, USDA is working on a legislative proposal to strengthen the Animal Welfare Act; holding a series of three public hearings to seek widespread input into making regulatory improvements; and toughening inspection and enforcement efforts. Two of three public forums on these issues already have been held. A third forum will be held in Washington, D.C. at a future date. **Contact: Patrick Collins (202) 720-2511.**

**NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE ESTABLISHED --** The National Defense Authorization Act for 1996 that became law February 10 transferred the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant from the Department of Defense to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and establishes the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. USDA's Forest Service will be responsible for prairie restoration and management under the administration of the Shawnee National Forest, headquartered in Harrisburg, Illinois. The new National Tallgrass Prairie encompasses 19,195 acres, 40 miles southwest of Chicago. In addition to use by the American people, the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie will provide habitat for many North American grassland birds which have had greater, more consistent and more widespread declines than any other bird group. **Contact: Alan Polk (202) 205-1134.**

**PACKER AND BUYER AGREE TO CONSENT DECISION --** Taylor Packing Co., Inc., Wyalusing, Pennsylvania, and packer buyer Harold A. Roney of Preston Park, Pennsylvania, have entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to settle an administrative complaint. Michael V. Dunn, assistant secretary for marketing and regulatory programs, said, "Under the terms of the settlement, Taylor Packing Co. and Roney shall not take turns with others in buying livestock at livestock markets, manipulate or control prices of livestock sold in commerce, restrict competition in the purchasing of livestock in commerce, or agree or arrange with others to refrain from bidding on livestock against any competitive livestock buyer." Taylor Packing Co. and Roney jointly and severally paid a \$50,000 civil penalty, and another \$20,000 is being held in abeyance for three years so long as Taylor Packing and Roney do not violate the terms of the settlement. **Contact: Sara Wright (202) 720-9528.**

**AARC CENTER BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED --** Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman appointed (February 23) three members to the Board of Directors of the Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center. The AARC Center is the only venture capital organization in the Federal government making equity available to commercialize industrial (non-food, non-feed) uses for agricultural materials and animal by-products. Glickman reappointed Harold Gilchrist, President and CEO of Gilchrist & Company, Inc., and Dr. Ralph Hardy, who recently retired as President of the Boyce Thompson Institute. Also appointed was Robert Raun, a farmer from Minden, Nebraska. The announcements were made at a recent AARC meeting in Mobile, Alabama. **Contact: Ron Buckhalt (202) 690-1624.**

## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #2022** -- In this edition, Gary Crawford offers a glimpse into a crystal ball to find out what food prices are expected to be. (**Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary**).

**CONSUMER TIME #1500** -- Tips for sending mail to our troops in Bosnia. Another look at food prices. Economic rebirth for our cities and towns. Shopping for interest rates. Looking to the future for the 1890's Colleges and Universities. (**Weekly cassette -- consumer features**).

**AGRITAPE #2014** -- The Russian poultry ban. Milk output lower than expected. Are we due for a drought? Wheat supplies may increase somewhat in 1996/97. Grain and oilseed demand expected to remain strong. (**Weekly cassette -- news features**).

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wednesday, March 13, milk production report, feed outlook, oil crops outlook, rice outlook, wheat outlook, world agricultural production, world grain production, and world oilseed outlook. Monday, March 18, former USSR update. Tuesday, March 19, sugar and sweeteners outlook, weekly weather and crop outlook. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES:** Patrick O'Leary reports on USDA's latest farm export forecast. Analysts are predicting record high exports this fiscal year and say the long term prospects improved as well. This forecast was released during USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Forum in Washington. O'Leary also reports on a recent conference on community empowerment where President Clinton heard success stories from participants in the federal Empowerment Zone program. The "EZ/EC" program in rural areas is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**ACTUALITIES:** Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman comments on agricultural prices, trade, the farm economy and the Farm Bill. Excerpts are from a February 26 speech to commodity groups in Phoenix, Arizona.

**SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWS FEEDS:** Thursdays from 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 402R (located at 89 degrees West), Transponder 13, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3960 MHz.

*Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. Internet E-mail: LQuinn@USDA.GOV.*

## OFF MIKE

**TEXAS FIRES**...burned an estimated 181,000 acres last week, reports **Blair Stewart** (Texas State Networks, Arlington, TX). Smoke is clearing after some rain, but fires due to the extended drought moved into Oklahoma and Kansas, too. Blair and his father, **Jim Stewart** (KFYO, Lubbock, TX) co-anchor a morning Lone Star Farm and Ranch Show that is carried by 56 affiliate radio stations.

**MANAGEMENT AFTER WILDFIRE**...workshops are scheduled next week in the South Central Kansas counties of Meade and Barber. **Hap Larson** (KBUF, Garden City, KS) said fences, outbuildings and some cattle were lost in grass fires last week. Local producers are seeking alternative feeds or hay to replace the burned-out grazing lands. Local range management specialists are suggesting that straw or manure be spread on some unprotected sandy soils. Highway visibility was reduced in affected areas by smoke or blowing ashes.

**SNOW**...has been abundant in the mountains, but lack of moisture is a concern for the wheat crop in eastern Colorado, reports **Colleen Martin** (Martin Agri-Country Network, Deer Trail, CO). Colleen grew up in agriculture and has been in broadcasting for 18 years. She is the former owner of the local radio station, but now produces a twice-daily agricultural network radio program carried by eight stations throughout the state. She covers current agricultural news, futures markets and Denver cash markets in her reports. Colleen called us to inquire about our daily radio newslines and weekly cassette service.

**COTTON ACREAGE**...in parts of Louisiana will be switched to corn this year because it is cheaper to grow and because farmers suffered significant cotton crop losses last year due to insect damage. **Don Molino** (Louisiana Agri-News Network, Baton Rouge, LA) reports that one parish expects to double its corn acreage. Don will be hosting the Southern Regional Meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters in New Orleans, March 28-30.



**LARRY A. QUINN, Director**  
**Video, Teleconference and Radio Center**

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